2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

time. Yakut pots are easily broken and remain porous until milk has been repeatedly boiled in them. The rims, the upper part, and sometimes the whole pot, are ornamented by impressions made with wooden stamps (*kūōs oyūlūr mas*, wood for ornamenting pottery). These design motives have special names; for instance, Fig. 53*d*, is called *tyñyrachtach torduya;* Fig. 53*g* is *biltägir.*

Though pottery-making was known to the Yakut since neolithic times it never developed into a real art. This may be explained partly by their early acquaintance with the manufacture of metals, particularly iron, which among the Yakut preceded that of bronze. Clay vessels came to be used more frequently as containers for liquids than as cooking utensils. However, fluids cannot be kept in them a long time without spoiling. After cooking the pot is cleaned with an iron scraper called *käsär* (Fig. 48) and dried.

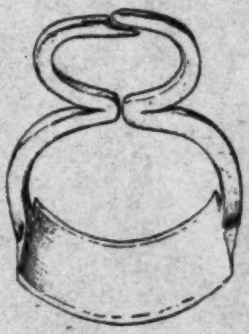

Fig. 48 (70-8775). An Iron Scraper for Clay Cooking Pots.

The forms of clay vessels vary; the commonest is an egg-like shape, the flat bottom of which is much smaller than the mouth. As may be seen from the illustration (Fig. 49*a–d*) the tea pots and charcoal stoves (Fig. 49*a*, *c*) to keep them warm are made after the Russian fashion. The size ranges from small cups for children to vessels capable of holding four to six gallons.

Additional evidence of the antiquity of the industry among the Yakut appears in the Turkic names for pottery-making implements and vessels. A clay pot is called *kūōs;* a metal kettle is called *salyr.* Even in places where, as in the northern districts of Yakut Province, no pottery is made at present, the word *kūōs* is well known and used as a linear measure. In terms of linear measure one may say, "one pot," "two pots," "pot of a walker, horse, or ox rider." For *kūōs* (pot) the Yakut understand a distance of from seven to twelve versts (from 6.6 to 8 miles). Translating *kūōs* in terms of time, it means a period during which a pot with meat for an average family is cooked. In Afghanistan *kūōs* is used as a linear measure of about eighteen miles. Böhtlingk[1] distinguishes the word *kūōs* as a unit of time from *kōs* as a linear measure as does Pekarsky in his Yakut-Russian dictionary, where he interprets *kōs* as a term for a day's journey from one camping place to another.

The Yakut do not know how to wash clay or to temper it, using it as it is found, with all its impurities, quartz and other non-plastic materials

[1] Böhtlingk, *ibid.*

6: Sauer--122 G-5 (1785-94) 1802 Yakut
116, 804

"They reckon distance by time; and 30 or 40 versts, according to the goodness of the roads, make a day's journey."

7: Shklovsky -- 39 T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut
116, 804

The kyoss is the Yakutian measure of length, but it is a very elastic one, for it is the distance to be traversed while ice melts in a kettle, and while water boils, and while meat is being cooked. As the kettles vary in size, the kyoss also varies in length. I do not know why, but the Russians there decided that a kyoss was about ten versts. According to Yakutian reckoning, and taking into consideration the varying sizes of kettles, there is a 'large ten versts' and a 'small ten versts.'"

16: Great britain Admiralty --165 [2] G-3 (no date) 1920 Yakut
116, 804

"They measure distance in terms of time; for instance a kess is the distance done in the time it takes a kettle to boil, a sufficiently elastic term."

46: Cottrell--136 T-2 (1840) 1842 Yakut
116, 804, 823

"In the vicinity of Yakutsk they have a curious way of measuring the distances by land, which appears to be peculiar to this people; the Kirghis have something analogous, but not similar to it. As the old German mode of reckoning distance was by time (the stunde), so do the Yakuts calculate by the time required to boil their food in cauldrons with which each yourte is furnished. This consists of the bark of fir and larch, which does instead of bread, not the outside, but a thin inner pellicule, which grows between the outer bark and the wood, and which marks every year the growth of the tree. This takes an hour to boil in these cauldrons, and the distance which can be performed in this time is called keusse. They have the keusse on foot and on horseback, which are of course very different. It must always be a most inaccurate way of judging of distances, as it must vary according to the state of the roads, and the speed of horse and man."

Nevertheless, the meadows and fisheries had already been taken over to The Yakuts

some extent by the toyons. The seizure of them was accompanied by a hard struggle since the communes resisted the toyon claims to their own land.

Such, in general terms, was the social structure of the Yakuts by the time the Russians arrived. Tsarist policy between the 17th and 19th centuries speeded up the development of social relations, so that Yakut society just before the October Revolution had already changed very much from what it had been three centuries ago. Nevertheless, many phenomena proved extremely stable and retained their archaic nature until recent times. Just before the Revolution the division of the Yakuts into strata according to the property they possessed was extremely marked. Most of the population did not even have enough cattle for the hunger norm (this norm, when the grade of the livestock was low, was considered to be two head of livestock per person), whereas in the few toyon households there were several dozen head of livestock per person. However, the unequal distribution of the livestock was by no means anything new for the Yakuts. But the question of land was different. The system which had grown up in the domain of land tenure was of comparatively recent origin. Since the arrival of the Russians in Yakutiya, the process of decomposition of the ancient communal-clan system of using the meadowland had been stepped up. The toyons were vigorously seeking to acquire the common lands. The development of private land ownership by the toyons continued to the 1760's, when certain measures introduced by the Russian administration gave it a new direction. In 1765, Yakuts were forbidden to buy or sell land, and in the next few years, through the activity of the Yakut Tribute Commission, the distribution of land in accordance with the so-called "sable" and "fox" taxes or parts of them was introduced among the Yakuts. Later on, in about 1820, this distribution of land assumed the form of the so-called "class system" of land usage, which legalized the extremely unequal distribution of the land, though, on the surface, it seemed to be something like common land usage. This "class system," which was later modified, had assumed the following form by the beginning of the 20th century.

The unit of measurement of land among the Yakuts was the "rick" (*кургуо*), a plot of land from which one hayrick could be mown (the size of the rick ranged from 10 to 30 cartloads, sometimes as many as 40 or 60). These allotments made up plots (*олбуга*) which were extremely varied in size, depending on the "class," and there were three or four "classes." One first-class plot (*бастыг* or *улахан олбуга*) was equal to two second-class plots (*орто олбуга*) and three or four third-class plots (kenniki or *кунчуруй олбуга*). The population was also divided into three or four classes: the toyon households belonged to the first class, and received a first-class plot, the middle households were usually assigned to the second class and the poorer people to the third and fourth classes, each receiving the corresponding clan plot. Thus, the system itself gave the toyons plots of land which were three or four times larger than those of the poorer people. It is true that in return for this the toyons had somewhat greater obligations, but the difference in their extent was extremely small. However, this inequality was by no means the only thing. The toyons actually possessed much more land, having seized it in a variety of different ways. For example, they had several plots, rather than just one, by registering them in the names of their children, workers and so on. It was also the custom to give officials (who were more often than not themselves toyons) additional plots of land, so-called *указ-кургуо* (from the Russian word "ukaz" [edict]), for which, incidentally, there was no payment. The influential toyons also obtained extra plots called ugayy (or kharyy).